

INFANCY

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work she was assisted by her daughter, her mother's sister, and the latter's daughter. Her husband also helped her a little more than usual. Both were very anxious, after all the past mishaps, that the coming child should live. 843

During this period the pregnant woman has no sexual intercourse, either with her husband or anyone else. Her husband, however, is permitted to have sexual relations with other women. Other pregnancy taboos affect the husband and not the wife. No man with a pregnant wife can fish or hunt wild pig. If he does, it is thought that he will have no success. Merely accepting food from any pregnant woman is considered inimical to fishing. In the magic connected with shark-fishing there is a spell designed to rid the man of the evil effects of having eaten with such a woman. One day a man, Tukan, returned from an unsuccessful hunt for wild pig, and he blamed his failure on the fact that there were so many women in the beginning of their pregnancy in the village. He said that they had eaten pig, and that this had weakened the dog's powers—how, he could not explain. Tukan made a magical spell over his dog to counteract this bad effect, and was confident that the next time he would have better luck when he went pig-hunting. [834]

When the woman feels that the child is due she bathes in the sea to cleanse herself. The husband leaves the house and goes to sleep in the men's house, and she goes to her mother's house. Occasionally her mother will come to her house. If the mother is dead, the mother's sister (whose kinship term is mother) takes her place. A few women of the hamlet, usually kin to the pregnant woman and who have had children, assist, and sometimes one woman more skilled than the others takes the lead in helping deliver the child. 844

The parturient woman sits on the ground. Another woman sits at her back and supports her by clasping her waist with

852 was given for Sapirosch, a female infant of about a year, or a little more, and Linga, a little girl of about three years of age, both of the hamlet of Penguli. It was a joint feast for the two given by their respective parents, and had been postponed because Ladawin, who is a potential and the preferred mate for Sapirosch, has been absent at the distant village of Karu. Sapirosch is the daughter of Ladawin's cross-cousin, which makes her his preferred mate. Whether they marry or not, they call each other by the term for husband and wife, *tumbo* and *malis*. Upon his return to Lesu preparations for the feast, which will be held the next day, are begun. The men of the hamlet go fishing and prepare their catch, and the women bring in taro from their gardens and prepare it to be baked in the *liga*. The next day the feast is held. The men eat in the cemetery. All the Hawk men eat the food prepared by the Eagle women, and they are in some subtle way supposed to be eating with Sapirosch, who is Eagle. Similarly, the Eagle men eat the food prepared by the Hawk women, and are supposed to be eating with Linga, who is Hawk. The feast is not taken too seriously. It is called *oning tsintset*, literally eat play, i.e. a playful feast.

[831] The Hawk men say playfully to Sapirosch, "Why have you not prepared food for us, when you have already shown us your vulva?" The Eagle men say the same to Linga.

[582] Theoretically, all the men of the opposite moiety are possible mates for the two little girls, and the feast is held for all of them, but it is particularly for those who stand in the relationship of the preferred mate.

While the men are eating in the cemetery, the women eat more casually on the beach. The Eagle women eat the food prepared by the Hawk women, and *vice versa*.¹

854 It is not only through the performance of the proper rites
834 and by feeding and caring for the infant that the duties of

¹ I was told that a similar feast was held for the possible mates of a little boy, but none was held during my visit.

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the parents towards the infant are fulfilled, but they must also observe certain sexual taboos during this period of infancy, when the mother is nursing her child, which lasts from two to three years. During this time the mother and her husband are not supposed to have any sexual relations with each other, or with anyone else. As if to avoid temptation (at least with his wife) the man does not sleep in the same house with her. Usually he sleeps in the men's house. However, in the case of Sapirosch's parents, the father slept at home, while the child and her mother slept in the maternal grandmother's house in the same hamlet. The husband eats with his wife and is with her during the day, but they separate at night. It is thought that if the woman indulges in intercourse during this period her milk would be no good. When questioned as to why the taboo should apply to the father, the answer is that if the father comes and lifts up his child or plays with him after he has had intercourse, the infant will smell it from his skin, sicken, and perhaps die. My Lesu friends pointed in proof to one child, who is not able to walk, although past the walking age. I was told that it is because his parents "stole" sexual intercourse while the infant was still being suckled. The same natives point to the good health of the infants, Sapirosch and Ongus the second, and say that it is because the parents of these children have lived in continence. One more sophisticated native who had been away to work at the white man's capital, and who knows that it is the custom of a white man and his wife to have intercourse soon after the birth of their child, regards the white man's practice as disgusting. [186]

It is interesting to note in this connection that a man and his wife observe the same sexual taboos, although for a much shorter time, when their pigs are giving birth. The owner of a pregnant pig and his mate are continent when the pig is expected to give birth, and also for the first month that the infant pig is being suckled. Should this taboo be broken it

- 231 is thought that the young pig would sicken and die; and
 ● 834 pigs are very valuable property.

262 The fish taboo which has already been mentioned in
 854 connection with pregnancy holds over to this period of
 854 infancy. The death of one infant about a month old was
 attributed to the fact that his father had eaten one of the
 taboo fish. He was a man formerly from a bush village, and
 therefore not cognizant of the fish taboos of the coast people.
 Actually, as far as I could observe, the infant died from an
 infected sore on the upper part of his leg.

854 Now, while it is both the parents, but more often certain
 834 clan relatives, matrilineal grandparents and uncles and
 834 aunts, in particular, who have duties to perform towards the
 602 infant, such as making the ritual feasts, taking care of him,
 etc., it is only the parents who are supposed to observe
 sexual taboos. A maternal aunt is called by the term
 mother (*Nangga*), and she has certain duties to perform for
 her nephew or niece, and a maternal uncle has many
 responsibilities in the giving of feasts, etc., but sexual taboos
 are restricted to the real parents.

854 The baby has been born. The women of the opposite
 moiety have fought playfully. His mother has suckled him.
 His maternal grandmother has taken care of him. So also
 has his father looked after him. He has been the affectionate
 pet of his whole hamlet. His maternal uncle and grandfather
 have given feasts for him at birth, when he cut his first
 tooth, and when he received his name. He has been betrothed,
 although everyone knows this is not to be taken too seriously.
 A feast has been given by his parents for his possible future
 mates. And during all this time his parents are supposed to
 have been sexually continent. The baby is now able to walk
 and to talk a little, and is approximately about three years
 old. He has entered childhood.

527 It had to be cooked and taro had to be prepared to be eaten with it. Late in the day the men carried the baked *beta* and taro to the cemetery, where they had a feast. The women ate the *beta* on the beach, or at home, wherever they happened to be, and not in any communal fashion. It was considered a great delicacy and much enjoyed. Its appearance, catching, cooking, and eating was a noteworthy occasion in the everyday life of the community.

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834 Shark-fishing is set off from other fishing because magic is a very integral part of it, because it is surrounded by many sexual taboos, and because it is a dangerous undertaking. A man is supposed to be sexually continent for a month before he goes shark-fishing, and should his wife be pregnant he cannot go at all. Four or five men may go out on an expedition, but only one man, the leader of the expedition, makes the magic, which is supposed to be effective for all of them. If a man does not know the proper magic he will pay another who does know it to lead the expedition for him. The shark belongs to the leader, and the others are paid with *tsera* for their share in the enterprise.

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789 The implements for catching the shark are a large rattle made of shells, a *kut*, which is a curved piece of wood with a loop of rope in the centre, through which the shark is held fast, and a thick stick made of hard wood, *gula*, used to knock it over the head. While essential, these are only a part of the equipment. It is magic which is used to inaugurate the expedition and in every succeeding stage.

Very early in the morning the man who knows the shark magic brings his canoe to that part of the beach where there are no houses, and there places it on the sand lengthwise, with the outrigger seaward. He then makes a little fire on the beach by the side of the canoe, passes the *bungla* leaf through the fire, and recites a spell as he moves the leaf slowly over the canoe.

This particular shark magic came from Medina, and

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the most common form of which is throwing oneself from a tree. If they did not do this they would be killed by their own clan relatives. Of those people who break the taboo and are not found out, we can, of course, know nothing. 835
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Other taboos cannot compete in seriousness with incest, and are mainly concerned with occupations or with certain periods in the life of the individual. Most of the sexual occupational taboos have already been mentioned in the discussion of economic structure, and are merely summarized here. 834

Taboos observed before fishing, hunting wild pig, going to war: a man may not have intercourse the night before, and if it is a shark-fishing expedition continence must be observed for a month in advance. Also, if possible, he should not eat with a pregnant woman or look at menstrual blood. If his wife is pregnant he may not go on any of these expeditions.

Making of *tsera* (not a Lesu occupation): a man engaged in this task must have no sexual relations with anyone while making the currency.

There are no sex taboos connected with house-building, making a canoe, or any other work.

Taboo connected with pregnancy and infancy:

1. During pregnancy the woman must be continent.
2. During the infancy of the child (suckling period) both the mother and her husband must be continent.

The breaking of these taboos brings its own punishment: bad luck and no success in the occupations, and illness for the child in the case of taboo connected with pregnancy and infancy; but breaking the incest taboo is considered a crime against society, which, through the agency of the clan, punishes violators. Other taboos concern only the individuals who violate them. If they are broken, the individual breaking them will have bad luck in his occupation, or some ill fortune will befall him. There is a direct relationship

- 834 between keeping the taboos and success, and they are functionally similar to magic. Both are designed to bring success. If not practised there will be no success. They may be called personal or individual taboos, i.e. only the individual is directly concerned. There is, of course, always the force of social prestige acting to maintain all customs, but in the case of the individual taboo, it is the bad luck supposed to follow their violation which is the main force in keeping them functioning. If a man should break the taboo on intercourse before he went shark-fishing, neither he nor anyone else would have confidence in his fishing, but he would not be punished otherwise. But should he break [684] the incest taboo, then he cannot live. He has done an irretrievable social wrong, and society will not tolerate his presence. Some taboos and customs not connected with sex, but more related to economic structure, such as the law of reciprocity, the custom of never asking for a return gift, etc., are likewise in the social class. The punishment for infringing one of these customs is complete loss of social prestige. This is in the same class with death punishment, only in a lesser degree.

DREAMS

- 154 It is interesting to see how the taboos are reflected in
835 dreams, myths, and obscene expressions. I was given to understand that incestuous dreams are fairly common. A man will frequently dream of having intercourse with a woman of his own moiety, sometimes it will be his real sister, his mother, his cross-cousin, and at other times some unrelated woman of his moiety. If a man has such a dream he is much ashamed of it, and rarely talks about it. Only those informants with whom I was very friendly, and who gave me their full confidence, would admit that they ever had these incestuous dreams. When they did talk about them their shame was clearly expressed in their attitude

764/431 each piece separately, said to whom and for what it was being paid. All the *tsera* was contributed by Maling's clan relatives, about twelve of them, the largest amount coming from Soles and Malalis. First, the people from whom the pigs have been bought were paid, then the pall-bearers, and then the dancers. Tobacco and food formed the payment to the two latter groups. Then there were gifts of portions of pigs by the owners, Maling's clan relatives, who have purchased them for the occasion, and which form part of a long chain of economic transactions, consisting of exchange gifts, already described in the section under economic structure. Finally all the gifts were made, the rites were over, and everyone returned wearily to their homes.

765 [834] For several weeks now all the women of the hamlet (this included the members of the extended family) slept in Tubung's house and the men at the men's house. There was an abstention from sexual intercourse at this time. During the day the ordinary family life was interrupted. The men spent most of their time sitting in the cemetery, and talked about any matter that happened to be of immediate interest. The women were together, busy much of the time with communal preparations of the meals, which the men ate in the cemetery and the women in the compound.

[262] During this time Tubung, the daughter of the dead woman, refrained from eating taro. This taboo is kept by parents and children, brothers and sisters, and husband or wife, should they be alive. During this same period dance rehearsals, which happened to have been begun before the death, were discontinued by everyone in the village. The end of the period was marked by a feast given by Soles, who hit a baked pig on the back.

764 The mortuary rites for Maling are typical. In illness it is usually a daughter or parent who takes care of the sick person. At Maling's death the behaviour of a husband

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a son or daughter, a nephew or uncle, on the mother's side, or a mother. The consort during this period is spending all his time wailing, and not taking any part in the actual preparations. 764
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During this interval between death and burial there is a fairly large group of people assembled at the hamlet where the death occurred. All the clan relatives and their consorts—the extended family—and sometimes a few others are there. At night the sexes sleep separately. All the women sleep in one house and all the men in another, or perhaps the men sleep out of doors in a compound in front of a house. There is abstention from all sexual relations. 513
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If the funeral is that of a very old person and the rites are being carried out in full detail dancing is part of the ceremonial. At the funeral of an old and important woman, Maling (her sister's son was a chief), there was dancing on the two nights which elapsed between the time of death and the burial. Maling died early in the day and that night all the women of the village and the neighbouring villages danced. The next night the men of the village and of neighbouring villages danced. On the following morning the corpse was buried. Each night dancing went on continuously until sunrise. Different groups danced, so that no one person danced all night long. The whole community (the village and neighbouring ones) was present as an audience. If the energy of the dancers appeared to flag, the daughter of the dead woman exhorted them to continue with promises of the payment which would later be made to them. The dances were the traditional ones used on all ritual occasions, and participants were members of the community, regardless of their kinship to the dead person. Dancing is a part of the rites only when the dead person is very old. 764
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The actual burial, however, does not vary very much according to the age of the dead person. Some time in the interval preceding burial the corpse is put in its coffin, usually an old canoe with the pointed ends removed. Members of the opposite moiety carry the corpse from the house in which it has been resting into the cemetery. They are decorated with leaves and white lime is used as a facial adornment. These pall-bearers advance in a square formation, singing, lift up the corpse, circle around the compound two or three times with it and finally carry it into the cemetery. At the same 764
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614 The payments for the pigs and services show very plainly that it is the clan relatives who are responsible for carrying out the mortuary rites. It is an economic matter and they are the ones who are under an obligation to make the payments. There are fewer exceptions to this rule than almost any other. When Kawitti died her son was absent at a distant village. There was no maternal nephew present either, and she had no daughter. She was survived by a husband, who, in the absence of a clan relative, made a very small burial feast. It was explained at the feast that it was a very small one and that as soon as the son came home he would make a big feast. Eleven days later the son returned, having walked from a far distant village, and after he finished wailing, he immediately began preparations for a really big feast. These preparations took about a week, at the end of which there was a large feast attended by over a hundred people. It was the son who officiated at the feast and who, assisted by his clan relatives, made the necessary payments. The husband of the dead woman was completely in the background.

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614 The ending of the majority of folk tales and myths is also rather interesting, in showing the economic responsibility of the clan relatives for the mortuary rites. An overwhelming number of the folk tales end with the death of one or more of the main characters. The tales all conclude on exactly the same note, "The man died and then all the clan relatives held a pig and made a feast."⁹

rites after burial

765 The rites after burial may be divided into two parts, those occurring in the period immediately after death (the first month) and those in the succeeding period, which extends to an indefinite number of years.

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834 The sleeping arrangements and taboo on sexual intercourse for the extended family, which began during the burial rites, are continued in this first period. The men sleep in one house, frequently the men's house, and all the women sleep in another house, sometimes

⁹ "Holding a pig" refers to holding it just before it is killed.

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the house of the dead person. These include usually the following :
real and classificatory sons and daughters and their spouses, brothers
and sisters, parents, nephews and nieces. This period of abstention
from sexual intercourse lasts about three weeks and its end is marked
by a feast. The initiative in terminating this period is taken by
a clan relative (a brother in several cases observed). He holds the
feast and at it announces the discontinuance of the sleeping taboo.
During the time when these sex taboos are enforced all those
implicated live in the hamlet where the death occurred. They
not only sleep there, but cook, eat, and spend their entire time
at this hamlet. One death occurred in the hamlet next to the one
in which I was living, involving most of the people in my hamlet,
which was consequently deserted for the three weeks following the
death. The men spend their time sitting around the cemetery,
talking and doing nothing. Their conversation is mostly about
~~any practical affair that happens to engage their attention.~~ After
one death it was about the expected visit of the district officer to
collect taxes, a very momentous affair in the life of the native,
but having nothing to do with the recent death. Each day the men
eat together in the cemetery. The women prepare the food to-
gether and remain in the compound to eat, but not with the men,
instead of returning to their own house to eat, as they usually do.
Some of these people are observing food taboos. The taboo is on
eating taro, the staple food of the native, and is observed by parents
or children, brothers or sisters, and husband or wife. This taboo
is kept until a few days before the mourners go back to their ordinary
sleeping arrangements, and its end is also marked with a feast,
when one of those observing the taboo hits a baked pig on the
back before it is cut up for the feast. The hitting of the pig is a
signal that the taboo is lifted. . . If dance rehearsals happen to have
been in progress they are discontinued for about ten days after the
death.¹⁰ A brother gives the signal for the resumption of the dance
rehearsals by sounding the *kolamuth* (a hollowed tree trunk used
as a drum). The native evidently makes a distinction between the

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¹⁰Dance rehearsals are carried on for months before a rite, of which they are a part, is held.

VITAL STATISTICS OF NEW IRELAND

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surreptitiously. Divorce is moderately common and individuals may have a succession of mates. 886

During the period of pregnancy a women may have no sexual intercourse with her husband or anyone else. The man may, however, have sexual intercourse with a woman other than his wife. After the birth of the infant neither the mother nor her husband may have intercourse with each other, or with anyone else, during the period of lactation. 843
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For the women there is thus an abstention from sexual intercourse for a minimum of three years and for perhaps as much as four. This taboo, if kept, would cause a long interval of time between births. It is difficult to find out exactly how strictly it is kept. Like all taboos in primitive societies it is sometimes broken. But one cannot collect statistics on the subject because one only hears of the cases when the culprits are found out. After living in the society for almost a year, the writer is of the opinion that it is kept moderately strictly. There is a grave social stigma for those who break it and are found out, and their infant is supposed to become ill. One such case happened during the author's visit and was the cause of much gossip. It was known that the parents of a certain sickly infant had broken the taboo and the natives all pointed to their unhealthy infant as the result. It is more difficult to break this taboo and not be found out than it is for a member of our society to transgress our custom of monogamy and not be caught. In the primitive society under discussion there are several conditions which make secrecy difficult. First, the village is small, numbering only a couple of hundred, and everyone knows everyone else well. Secondly, practically all of the social life is carried on outdoors, and extra-marital intercourse generally takes place in the bush, which limits somewhat the privacy. Thirdly, these people, like all others, love to gossip and indulge in it to a great extent. It is therefore not easy to conceal a violation of this taboo. The social disgrace of being detected, and the belief that it will harm the child, are strong deterrents in a society motivated largely by social prestige. [753]

There is no infanticide and, as far as I know, no physical means of abortion. There is, however, a leaf, or rather several leaves, chewed by the women and believed to cause sterility. There is another leaf which if chewed within two months after conception will make the embryo disappear, according to native belief. Specimens of both kinds 847
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